

# THE LESSON OF PATSY MCGREGOR

01/31/20 | Episode 12

In this story, young Mrs. Patsy McGregor, a mother of three boys moves with her husband from Boston, Massachusetts to Marshall, Alabama, quickly learns the lesson of never judging a book by its cover.

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In 1956 in the town of Marshall, Alabama, there lived a family of five; the McGregor family: Clark and Patsy McGregor and their three sons, Clark Jr., Michael, and Little John.

The McGregor's are originally from Boston, however, because Clark's employer relocated to the town of Marshall, so did the McGregor's, much to the dismay of Patsy McGregor.

Although the civil war had ended 91 years earlier, the angst between southerners and northerners would sometimes smolder like a campfire ready to ignite anew.

Patsy McGregor was not a fan of the south. Mainly because of the gossip she heard from her northern neighbors who lived or visited the south whom had concluded that all southerners were sheet wearing, arrogant, pro-slavery bigots.

Something Patsy would quickly realize was not accurate.

While there were those in the south like a German is inaccurately thought to be toward Nazism or a Russian to Communism, who were as her northern gossipy friends described, not very good neighbors nor the type of neighbors you would necessarily want to associate with but pray for, the majority of the folks in the small town of Marshall were hospitable, welcoming, kind, and helpful.

**“Why bless my soul,”** Patsy said to herself after getting settled into their new home and becoming friendly with the neighbors, **“These folks are nothing close to what my friends in Boston described them as.”**

Patsy was afraid because the McGregors were Irish and Catholic. She feared that they would be shunned by the residents of Marshall because of their ancestry and faith. However, the opposite proved to be true. Marshall was a diverse town that consisted mainly of hard-working families who were of Irish, Italian, Polish, African American and even Hispanic heritage or descent. Most of the folks understood the ugliness of racism and bigotry and why it was not welcome in the town of Marshall.

Clark and Patsy remained in Marshall until John was old enough to go to college. Once John moved out of the house to live on the Notre Dame campus, Clark and Patsy put their house up for sale and moved back to Boston. After settling in Patsy decided to write a book about her southern experience of which she wrote in her forward...

**“Never judge a book by its cover. Gossip truly is a tool of the devil. You don’t have to like your neighbors to love them, but to refuse to love them because you don’t like them is to deny the very love of Christ. Which of the two is worse – to reject thy neighbor because of ignorance or to reject the Lord through thy neighbor because of arrogance?”**

**“Just because someone says it is so, does not make it is so.”**

### **The moral of the story?**

Every coin has two sides, just as there are two sides to every story. Look beyond the superficiality of the individual and see who they really are

deep down inside. In most cases, you will learn that they are not so different from you.